

**Amendments to the Specification**

Please replace the paragraph bridging pages 8-9, with the following amended paragraph:

Referring to FIG. 1B, a titanium silicide ( $\text{TiSi}_x$ ) seed layer 30 is formed over the exposed surfaces 14, 18 respectively, of the silicon substrate at the bottom 28 of the contact opening 24 and the insulative layer 18. Typically, the seed layer is formed to a thickness of about 250 to about 300 angstroms. The resulting  $\text{TiSi}_x$  seed layer 30 that forms at the interface with the diffusion region 22a is useful to lower resistance in the contact region. Techniques and process systems for forming a titanium silicide layer are well known in the art, as described, for example, in U.S. Patent No. 6,086,442 (Sandhu, et al.) and No. 5,976,976 (~~Doan~~ Doan, et al.), the disclosures of which are incorporated by reference herein.